

MRS. HARTWELL'S "PERFECT TREASURE"

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WHEN Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Hartwell moved into their apartment on Stuyvesant Square, New York, the bloom was still on their honeymoon and the wax finish on their mahogany furniture. They were young, they were in love, and their optimistic outlook on life, the natural outcome of these invaluable blessings, was undimmed by Mrs. Hartwell's ignorance of housekeeping or by Mr. Hartwell's complacent breadth of view as to every practical domestic question. They had theories, though they lacked knowledge; and they talked these over on the evening they arrived in their new home, in the cheery light of the gas-lights that deceptively rubbed cheeks in their apartment's one fireplace.

The packers had promised to begin their work in Mrs. Hartwell's former home at eight in the morning, and complete the unpacking in her new abode by two. They began at three in the afternoon and departed, leaving it incomplete, at ten. The robust laundress engaged to assist Mrs. Hartwell in laying rugs and arranging furniture, "that the apartment might be in perfect order by evening," had not come at all. But these episodes, though annoying, were too novel to be crushing. The Hartwells lightly dismissed them from their minds. Though healthily exhausted by an exceedingly strenuous day, full of unexpected and often disheartening incidents, they were for the first time "at home," and their souls expanded in that genial atmosphere of united possession.

Their living-room was filled with barrels; their Morris chairs were on top of their piano; their rugs were still in unsightly rolls; three of their choicest wedding gifts had been broken; and their best

pair of portières revealed a large hole as a souvenir of one light-hearted son of toil who had thoughtlessly put his foot through it. But what did these things matter? They were together; their new life was beginning. For a time they sat in happy silence, lulled by the strange beauty of this novel reflection. At last Mrs. Hartwell raised her head apologetically from her husband's shoulder and uttered a thought that arose in her.

"There's one thing that may worry us a little, dearest," she said, "and that's the servant problem. Every one has warned me of it, and I expect trouble. But I've made one firm resolution: I'm *not* going to have it get on your nerves, whatever it does to mine. So I shall never mention the subject to you. Remember, I go on record for that, Joe!"

Young Joseph Hartwell protested warmly against this considerate decision. He was determined to share all his wife's burdens, of whatever nature, just as he expected her to share his. He explained this, and added that there must be perfect confidence— She interrupted him.

"In big things, Josey darling, yes," she said, palpitantly. "I'll tell you all that's worth while, and I'll never forgive you if you don't tell me every single thing that happens down-town. But the servant question is different. *That* is the woman's part of a household. Besides, it's not vital. You would n't expect me to wake you at night to tell you I had been bitten by a mosquito, would you?"

Mr. Hartwell looked so much as if he would, at that period of their common existence, that she hurried on without giving him time to interrupt her.

"That's what the servant question is,"

she resumed—"merely a succession of mosquito bites—annoying, but harmless. And they must be endured alone."

Her husband, a young man whose natural intelligence was developed by a careful reading of the monthly magazines, grasped this opening and pointed out that malaria, typhoid, and yellow fever had been known to follow in the mosquito's wake, even as nervous exhaustion followed in that of the American servant. His wife remained unimpressed.

"The whole point is this, darling. You must be undisturbed. You will be working all day for our bread," she declared, voice and gaze underscoring the point, "and when you come home exhausted at night, this must be your haven of happiness and rest. I have sworn on Mother's Bible, all by myself, that I will *not* vex your soul with domestic cares the way so many wives do. You must find your home *perfect*; and I 'll hold your poor tired head while you tell me all about that horrid Brown and the nasty things he has said to you."

Deeply touched by this thoughtfulness and devotion, young Joseph Hartwell clasped his wife to his breast. "I guess I 'll be able to stop growling about Brown," he predicted, "if you won't let off steam on the servant question. But remember, if you ever feel the need of a sympathetic ear, you 've got two of them right here."

She pulled them with coquettish ferocity, to show her proprietorship, and the conversation trailed off into lighter things after this sturdy initial pact. The corner-stone of ideal married life had been securely laid.

The next morning Mr. Hartwell drank a cup of some dark and mysterious brew which had looked enough like coffee to make its weird flavor something of a shock, devoured an egg that had boiled dutifully for him since dawn, and rose from the table with a sigh of relief.

"Was the coffee all right, darling?" asked his bride, with a pathetic sense of the possibility that his home coffee had tasted differently. "I was n't quite sure about it, but of course the new maid will know how it 's done, exactly."

"It was bully," he assured her, loyally. "I never drank anything like it," he added with perilous veracity. He struggled into

his overcoat as he spoke, and faced her, ready for the ordeal of their first farewell.

"I 'm going to the intelligence office to-day," she told him, when the poignant moment was over. "To-night I 'll have a nice little maid here, with a blue print dress and a cap on. And to-morrow morning you 'll have delicious coffee, and eggs and bacon, and sugar-covered waffles!"

Young Mr. Hartwell carried the memory of these words away with him, and found them returning to his mind as the busy hours flew by. His stomach felt strangely empty. He had disliked to see his wife work that morning, even at the housewifely occupation of preparing his breakfast—and her own, too, he felt obliged to add in justice. He had not married her to make a household drudge of her, he told himself. He would be glad when she had secured a helper who would do all the heavy, uninteresting household tasks, leaving Jessie free to add those delicate feminine touches he vaguely surmised to be in a lady's province. Then, of course, they would both be glad to have some one at hand who could cook, not more lovingly, but less conjecturally.

Moreover, there was something rather alluring to him, just entering on his own domestic domain, in the idea of a neat maid around the place—one who would be trig and quiet and respectful; who would brush his clothes and lay his newspaper beside his breakfast plate, and look after his material comfort in similar small but important ways, with the gentle but masked joy of those who serve.

This day, the first they had spent apart since their marriage, seemed endless to him, though he was very busy. At the stroke of six he raced home to her, with a jocund song of thanksgiving in his heart that she was his to go home to. Also he pictured, like a noiseless, fluttering blue-bird playing about its nest, the tidy little maid. He already felt his coat taken from him by her deferential but eager hands. The place would be in order, too, and not look like a junk-shop. It was "home" to which he was hastening. He ungratefully forgot the years during which his mother and sisters had spent most of their waking hours ministering to his needs. He felt that now life was to offer him something new—something different from anything he had ever known before. He was right.



Drawn by Harry Townsend. Half-tone plate engraved by H. C. Merrill

THE "PERFECT TREASURE"

As his key entered the lock, his wife, who had evidently awaited the sound, opened the door. She looked pale, tired, and, after the glow of welcome had passed from her face, strangely depressed.

"Don't take off your coat, Josey," she said, gently. "We—we must go out to dinner. Is n't it a shame! I have n't found a maid *yet*. But of course," she added, with desperate cheerfulness, "we'll have one to-morrow."

Over their restaurant dinner she confided to him the events of the day.

"It is n't exactly complaining to you when I have n't even *got* a servant yet, is it?" she asked, wistfully. "Of course when I have one, if I get one, I won't mention her."

Reassured on this point, she entered upon a stirring chronicle of care-filled hours.

"I went to five intelligence offices," she said, "and not one maid would even promise to come. Aunt Addie went with me, and she says they most always do promise, at least; so one has a few moments of cheer and hope. But to-day they would n't even call and chat for a few minutes. They asked such high wages, and they expected so many privileges that I was dazed. But the worst of it was that not one of them was a general houseworker!"

The last words came out in a wail of despair.

Her husband smiled.

"Oh, well, then," he said, airily, "you went to the wrong places, darling. To-morrow you can go where the general houseworkers—er—blossom."

"But they don't," his wife explained, patiently. "They don't blossom anywhere. That's just the point. They don't exist. They're extinct, like the dodo, only they are all don't-don'ts," she added, with a pathetic effort at gaiety. "Nowadays they all specialize! Aunt Addie says that as soon as a general servant learns to offer you things on your left side at the table, she considers herself a trained waitress and wants twenty-five dollars a month. Twenty-five dollars! Why, Josey, I thought we could get one to do everything, except the laundry work, for eighteen!"

Her young husband looked thoughtful, but took refuge in a soothing optimism.

"Never mind," he said, robustly. "Don't you worry, little girl. Of course there

must be general servants, or other folks would n't have 'em. I'll ask the fellows at the office how their wives manage!"

"Joseph Hartwell!"

Joseph Hartwell's spine chilled. He had never before heard that quality in his wife's voice. He did not want to hear it again. But it still lay as a delicate frost over her next words.

"Don't you dare! Do you think I'm going to have them laughing at us, in your office, for asking advice on the servant question within forty-eight hours after we have gone to housekeeping? Now, I *never* shall mention the subject to you again."

Hartwell soothed her with honeyed words.

"We should n't have expected to get the right person the first day," he told her, later. "That would be too much luck. Things don't happen that way, in the every-day world. And you must n't be discouraged if you don't even get her to-morrow. Take plenty of time to it. It won't hurt us to take our meals out for a day or two."

They spent the evening cozily in the warmth of the gas-logs, discussing the servant question. Jessie described the women she had interviewed that day, their types, their aspirations. Joseph recalled anecdotes of servants he had met in his mother's home. In the fullness of their interest in the general subject, they almost forgot its individual poignancy for them. This was revealed to them, however, with relentless force, early the following morning. Mr. Hartwell, cheerily emerging from his plunge, was confronted by the stricken face of his wife. Reading tragedy on it, he stopped short.

"Oh, Josey!" she cried despairingly, "there's nothing for your breakfast! I forgot to get some more eggs, and the baker has n't been told yet to leave rolls. I'll do it to-day. Can you forgive me?"

Mr. Hartwell, sternly subduing the demands of a healthy young stomach, assured her that he could, and added airily that it did n't matter. If she would hurry and dress, they would breakfast at the same hospitable restaurant that had sheltered them the night before. The delay made him late at the office, however, and the knowing grins of his fellow clerks as he entered did not help him to accept with unruffled calm the stern glance Mr.

Brown, the firm's unpopular junior partner, cast first upon his flushed face and then upon the placid disk of the clock.

The chronicle he listened to that night was much the same as the one of the preceding evening. There was no maid, there was no order in his home, but there was an added layer of care on the brow of his wife, and a deeper deposit of dust on their possessions. There were also ampler details of her experience. She was as one who had gone to the edge of the servant question, looked over, and shuddered to dwell on the depths she had seen.

"Well, then, if there are no general houseworkers, why not get a waitress and let her cook, too?" asked Mr. Hartwell, patiently, when he had listened to a recital of a quest which seemed to have combined the respective difficulties that attended those of Don Quixote, Mademoiselle de Maupin, and Diogenes. His wife's eyes held a glint of disapproval, the first that had ever shone there when they were turned on him. She explained in simple words, adapted to the understanding of one of tender years and limited intelligence.

"Waitresses do not cook," she said. "They only stand and let us wait. Cooks do not wait. Why should they, if they can make us hire a waitress to do it? And, oh, Josey,"—her voice broke—"I *am* so tired."

Again he comforted her, and, from the depths of a philosophic conviction that occupation tends to peace of mind, he persuaded her to permit him to make a beginning that evening in the small matter of unpacking and settling. As a result, one barrel was delivered of a mass of china and glass, several pieces of which were broken, two pictures were hung, and one bookcase was set up in shamefaced emptiness, to await filling when their boxes of books were opened. While Mr. Hartwell was regarding, with expanding nostrils and set lips, a finger-nail on which he had unpremeditatedly brought down a hammer a few seconds before, his wife approached him with coos of womanly sympathy.

"But, oh, Josey, how dreadfully dirty you are!" she added. "Why did n't you get into old clothes before you began? That nice gray coat is black with dust. I'm afraid you've ruined it; and—great

heavens! Joseph Hartwell! look at the hole you've torn in the leg of your new trousers!"

Mr. Hartwell looked. A hot desire for rich, easy expression of his feelings boiled in him. He sternly overcame it, but was strangely silent the remainder of the evening. His wife, observing this, attributed it to fatigue. She gave him two eggs the next morning, which obtruded themselves on his consideration during the day as things not entirely past. Also, a cup of coffee whose memory he refused to harbor at all, lest it should seem criticism of Jessie. As he was about to leave the house he addressed her, however, in tones that held a new note of authority.

"I hope you'll get some one to-day, Jessie," he said, "to come in here and take hold of things. Don't be too particular. Get any one you can—good, bad, or indifferent. Then, while she's putting the place into shape, you can take your time to choose a good maid. But make a start now with anything—even if she cannot cook anything but eggs and coffee," he permitted himself to add.

His words were desperate, and so was his expression. When he returned home that night he beheld their result. A grenadier of a woman, with gray hair, a red nose, and sleeves rolled to her shoulders confronted him as he entered his little hall. Close behind her was his wife. She wore a towel on her head, and a huge apron enveloped her. Gloves covered her hands, one of which held a piece of bric-a-brac, while the other flourished a dirty dusting-cloth. She held up for his kiss a begrimed little face.

"Oh, is that you, Josey—so soon?" she inquired, anxiously. "I hoped you would n't get home till I had changed into something clean. But we've done wonders. Look, dearest!"

Dearest looked. They had done wonders. He saw them around him. The orderly, packed-up appearance of the first nights had given place to chaos. They had unpacked barrels and scattered their contents over the floor; had unwrapped packages and left the papers and string where they fell; had uncrated furniture and left the empty crates to add to the indescribable confusion.

"Great Scott!" exclaimed Joseph Hartwell, aghast. Then, realizing, from his

wife's warning signals, that he was not living up to his rôle, he pulled himself together.

"By Jove," he said, with a quick recovery, "how did you do it all? You must have worked like Trojans. But—er—would n't it have been simpler to get rid of the boxes and strings and paper—send 'em down-stairs, you know? And to unpack only one barrel at a time, and then put the things away before you unpacked the rest?"

He stopped. His wife was making more signals, and the new servant was beside him, arms akimbo, her face darkened by brooding wrongs.

"So *that* 's the kind ye aare!" she demanded, "finding fault the very first thing, is it? Herself warned me ye 'd make a fuss over the mess, but I 'd not believe it." She was unrolling her sleeves now, and she pulled them into place with an angry tug as she ended. "Give me me day's wages," she added, "an' I 'll be goin'. If 't was a ginerall houseworker yez wanted, I c'u'd do the wurruk. But what yez needs is a team av horses, three good carts, six men, a vacyum claner, a cook, a paarlor maid, and a stame-dredge!"

She flounced off to her room after this outburst, and though they tried on her the power of their united eloquence and charm, she departed haughtily, carrying the dingy suitcase that contained her worldly possessions. She left as a souvenir of her sojourn two burned veal cutlets—which the Hartwells devoured in depressed silence, broken finally by the gentleman.

"*Damn* her!" he said, vigorously. "*Damn* 'em all!" Then he bit his lips and flushed. "I beg your pardon, Jessie," he muttered, contritely. But his wife was looking up at him with a face glorified by the light of a great gratitude.

"Thank you, darling," she said, simply. "I 've been wanting to all day, but of course *I* could n't!"

The next three months of the Hartwells' domestic life covered a period they both subsequently declined to discuss. A multitude of servants, old and young, plump and thin, came, lingered a few hours, or at most a few days, and went their way. They were of all nationalities, of all complexions, of all tempers—but two things they had in common: a deep-seated, comprehensive ignorance of their work, coupled

with a grim determination to receive the highest wages ever paid to general houseworkers in the history of feminine labor. One bright Norwegian girl, carefully trained for a week by Mrs. Hartwell in the gentle art of waiting on table, triumphantly informed her mistress at the end of the seventh day that she had secured a good place as "second girl," owing to this same instruction. It was after this episode that Mrs. Hartwell sought her husband with a demand for "new swear words," and, finding that he had used his entire vocabulary and had nothing else to offer, sank into a depression which lasted a fortnight.

At the beginning of the fourth month Hilda came, bringing hope with her. The evening of her arrival she answered in person young Hartwell's imperative ring of the bell, for he had forgotten his latch-key. He had been dreading the new horror before him, so he stared hard as he crossed the threshold. Here at last was the vision of his dream and Jessie's! He pinched himself. Was he dreaming? Or perhaps he had been run over by a cable-car or automobile, and transferred to a world where such visions await those who have borne much here below!

Hilda was blonde, Hilda was young, Hilda was pretty, and Hilda was in blue with a white cap. Even as he took in these glorious, these impossible, details, Hartwell felt deferential hands relieving him of his hat, then of his overcoat. Dazedly he entered his little drawing-room, to be met by another, fairer vision—his young wife, radiant. She was dressed for dinner, and she had a carnation in her hair—a favorite adornment of hers in the past, but one she had abjured as a hollow mockery during these last months.

"How sweet you look!" cried Hartwell. "What does it all mean?" She stopped him, with a quick hand on his lips. Then, drawing him into their small bedroom, she explained in an excited whisper.

"You 'll have to dress for dinner," she said, hurriedly. "You won't mind, will you? *She* expects it!"

She spoke the last words with a furtive glance at the closed door. Hartwell's eyes followed hers, stupidly.

"She—who?" he asked.

"Hilda."

The name came softly, almost like an

invocation. Disregarding his puzzled look, his wife went on.

"When it neared dinner-time, Hilda asked if I needed more than half an hour to dress. She seemed to take it for granted that I *would* dress. So I—I did. And she said dinner would be at seven, of course, because if you did n't get home till half-past six, you would need half an hour to bathe and dress. *Please hurry, Josey.*"

Josey hurried. Several thoughts arose in him, but he kept them to himself. A look at his wife's happy face checked their utterance. When his toilet was completed he followed Jessie into the small drawing-room. It was immaculate. The gas-logs blazed on the hearth, the light of the reading-lamp streamed through a polished chimney, a great easy-chair was drawn up to the fire. Before he could sit down the new maid was at the door.

"Dinner is served," she announced. Long ancestral avenues seemed to diverge from Hilda. She had an "atmosphere" which had to be lived up to.

As in a dream the Hartwells went to the table. The soft light of shaded candles fell on their best dishes, their most exquisite linen. These things had been carefully packed away, but Hilda had found them. Joseph Hartwell drew his wife's chair out for her, an attention he had omitted to pay her for weeks—seated himself in his own, and vainly tried to catch her eye. She was chatting pleasantly, but in formal tones, like a rural social leader at a party. Hartwell grinned at her boyishly, but there was no answering flicker of humor in her cool, responsive smile. She was living up to Hilda.

That night, after dinner, he sought to probe the mystery of Hilda's capture, but Jessie cut him short.

"We've got her!" she said. "Now let's look on these past months as a bad dream, and forget it. Let's forget the horrible habits we've formed lately, too, and be civilized again. I'm going to keep my resolution from this time on—the one, you know, about not bothering you with the servant question. Henceforth I intend to meet the housekeeping difficulties without your help."

It looked, indeed, as if she could, with Hilda's help. Hartwell, sitting at the breakfast-table the next morning, drank

Hilda's delicious coffee, ate Hilda's crisp bacon, enjoyed Hilda's perfect muffins, and felt his heart go out to Hilda in an expansion of domestic content to which he had heretofore been a stranger. He smiled at her gratefully, bid her a cheery good-by when he left, and greeted her as a true and tried friend when he returned at night. His wife, again in full evening dress, greeted him with the old-time joy.

"But you're late, Josey," she said, alertly. "You have only twenty minutes to dress for dinner."

"Then I won't dress," declared Hartwell, lightly. "I'm horribly tired, anyhow, and I've got the beginning of a beastly headache."

His wife's face clouded. For a moment she stood silent, in troubled thought. Then she said, suddenly:

"Please dress, Josey. I'm sorry to insist when you don't feel well, but it's—it's really important."

Hartwell rose without a word, set his lips, went to his room and dressed with a sense of injury which deepened as he struggled with a refractory tie. His evening clothes were laid out for him, so he was back in the drawing-room in a surprisingly short time. His wife rewarded him with a grateful smile.

"I had tea this afternoon," she said. "Hilda brought it in at five, though I was alone, and served it as daintily as if we were having a party. She took our brass bowl to the florist's this morning, and had him fill it with ferns as a centerpiece for the table. She's making a great deal of work for herself, but she seems to like it."

Her husband frowned dubiously.

"I don't mind her making work for herself," he remarked frankly, "but I'm not sure I enjoy having her make work for me. Say, Jessie, have we got to dress for dinner *every* night, whether we feel like it or not? Of course I know we ought to, theoretically; but practically—have we *got* to?"

Jessie nodded solemnly.

"I think we have," she said. "But I don't mind. I like it. I always have."

"Oh, well, all right." Hartwell was in a better humor now. Dinner was announced that moment. He was in a still more mellow mood when he had eaten it. Hilda was a good cook, and how she could

cook so well and yet give them such perfect service in the dining-room he could not understand.

"To-night you go to theater, not?" observed Hilda, affably, as she served the dessert.

Hartwell stared. His wife looked eloquently at him.

"Why, we were rather thinking about it," he said, carelessly. "I guess we will. They say 'Madame Z' is a stirring thing. We might go to that and be harrowed up, if you like, Jessie."

Hilda smiled in sweet approval. After dinner she bustled around eagerly, to get them ready. Her face fell when she saw that Mrs. Hartwell's evening coat did not match her gown, but she wrapped it round her loyally and without comment.

"Now I call taxicab," she said, calmly. And, going to the telephone, she did so without waiting for the protest which was trembling on Joseph's startled lips.

"She seemed mighty glad to get rid of us," he murmured, as they entered the waiting vehicle a few minutes later. He had been irritated by the incident of the wrap. "Do you suppose," he added, ironically, "her young man's coming and she wants the parlor? And say, Jessie, why did she think we wanted a taxi?"

Mrs. Hartwell shook her head.

"I suppose," she said, slowly, "she is accustomed to people who take a taxicab as a woman would take a fresh handkerchief. But I'm sure she is n't expecting company. I don't think Hilda would do anything that is n't right."

They enjoyed the play, and came home after it in a humble cable-car, Hilda's expectant eyes not being on them. They were in good spirits after the drama, sad though it had been, and Hartwell realized, with sudden compunction, that such outings for Jessie were rarer than they should have been so early in their married life. Passing the dining-room when they reached home, he observed that the gas there was burning dimly, and entered to turn it out. A cry of surprise and pleasure burst from him.

"Great Scott, Jessie!" he said. "Come here!"

Jessie rushed. On the table stood a plate of sandwiches, a delicate salad, a bottle of claret, and Mr. Hartwell's sole box of cigars. Like children the two fell

upon the feast, after a gasp of adult appreciation.

"Say, is n't this great, really?" remarked Hartwell, with his mouth full. "She's a 'perfect treasure,' that girl,—the kind we read about."

"Indeed she is," Jessie acquiesced. "But—can we keep her? There's the rub. We'll have to be so careful!"

She looked thoughtful, and a line of anxiety was discernible on her brow. During the day she had gleaned from Hilda the uneventful story of that young person's life. She repeated it later to her husband as he smoked peacefully before the gas-logs.

The next evening at six, young Hartwell staggered into his home under the weight of an unwieldy box.

"Carried it myself," he explained, sheepishly. "It's a present for you, and I wanted to be here when you opened it. Do you realize that it's my first *married* present to you, Jessie? We've been in such a mess that I have n't had time, until now, to even think of the delicate little attentions all authorities agree that a man should pay his wife."

As he spoke Jessie was feverishly unfastening strings and tearing away paper. She gasped when the contents of the box came into view. A handsome evening wrap, selected with surprisingly good taste, lay before her. With a cry of delight she took it out, unfolded it, and put it on at once. It fitted perfectly and was extremely becoming. She hurled it and herself into her husband's waiting arms.

"I got the hint I wanted last night," said Hartwell, after a satisfying pause, "when I found you did n't have one that would go with every gown. Before that I could n't think what to give you. Do you realize that we were married four months ago to-day? This is an occasion worth celebrating."

"Do I remember?" She looked at him reproachfully. "Wait. I'll show you! You'll be more glad that you remembered it. Come here."

"Here" was apparently under the bed, whither she had just dived. She emerged breathless, bearing a carefully wrapped parcel, which she handed him without a word. He opened it eagerly and beheld a black velvet smoking-jacket.

"My anniversary present to you," gur-

gled his wife, happily. "I thought of it last night when you hated so to dress. Evenings when we stay home you can take off your dinner coat and be comfy in this. Hilda won't mind," she added, as she helped him into it.

At the end of their fifth month an awakening came. Young Mrs. Hartwell approached her husband with features puckered with anxiety.

"Josey, darling," she said, "I've just been going over the grocer's and butcher's bills. They're perfectly awful! They're almost twice what they were last month."

Mr. Hartwell nodded solemnly.

"I know," he told her. "I've just been having a session over the bills for gas and taxicabs. The figures are staggering."

He showed them to her. She gasped. Then, with a long sigh, she answered.

"It means Hilda," she said, reluctantly. "We've been living up to her, you see. Have n't you realized that?"

He stared at her with masculine obtuseness. "I know we've had a bully time," he said, "and been mighty comfortable; but I don't see where she comes in."

"Oh, yes, you do, Josey Hartwell!" His wife's tone was triumphant. "You've understood exactly as well as I have. Only you would n't admit it. Have n't I seen you dressing for dinner nights when you'd almost rather die? Did n't you buy silk socks because she wondered why you had none? Did n't you hire taxicabs a dozen times rather than have her think you were stingy? Have n't you taken me to the theater twice a week because *she* expected you to?"

Hartwell writhed. "Well," he conceded, "suppose I did? Have n't you given three dinners this month simply because she wondered why we did n't entertain more?"

His wife's head drooped. "I know," she said. "And I wanted to show her off. And I've squandered our income in laundry bills because she expected me to wear all my best wedding lingerie—and of course she could n't do it up. She had n't time. She was too busy laundering extra table linen, and getting late suppers for us, and planning for our pleasure in various ways, and arranging for our life as she intends us to live it."

"What's the answer, Jessie?" Hartwell added the figures before him and

held up the total for her inspection. "Must we let her go?" he asked, "or can we economize in other ways, and keep her? We can stand the bills, I suppose, but are n't we parting with our liberty, too? She rules us with a rod of iron. She makes us do everything *she* thinks best. Is it worth it?"

His wife hesitated, began to speak, then stopped. A great wave of color rolled over her delicate face.

"Oh, we can't let her go, Josey," she cried. "We can never let her go, *now*. She was talking yesterday about children. She said she would just love to have one in the house. It seemed too good to be true, that she should feel that way. To think she's so interested! It made me *perfectly* happy! She was just dear when I told her. But,"—this point settled, her voice changed as she turned to the smaller issues—"how are we going to manage?"

Her husband's chest swelled. His voice was full of pride as he answered.

"That's all right, darling," he said, as he held her very close, very tenderly. "I got a big increase in salary to-day. I was just bluffing a little over the bills before telling you about it. And Brown, good old Brown, told me he considered me the most valuable man the firm has. He says if I keep up the pace I've struck, I can count on a good rise every year. So you see we're all right. Hilda stays right on. Her principal job hereafter is to take care of you, and make you comfy. We'll get a woman to do the washing and ironing and other heavy work."

Mrs. Hartwell drew a long breath of happiness.

"She'll like that," she said. "And oh, to think she's really *glad*!" Then, "They'll make you a partner yet, darling," she predicted, proudly. "They know they can't get along without you."

Her mind reverted again to the vital problem in their lives.

"Hilda will stay now," she said, confidently. "This—this will hold her."

For a moment they sat in happy silence. The shadow of the angel's wing touched them, but the angel had the bright face of Hilda. Then young Mrs. Hartwell continued aloud her train of thought:

"She can see for herself," she murmured, contentedly, "that we're doing everything we can to please her!"